

Claims:

1. A holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle, said holder comprising:

a securement means for anchoring a manually carryable article within an occupant compartment of a vehicle, said securement means comprising an inflatable bladder having a deflated configuration for facilitating insertion of an article therein and establishing an article-release configuration of the holder, and an inflated configuration for impeding disengagement of an inserted article therefrom and establishing an article-securing configuration of the holder.

2. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 1, wherein said securement means is coupled to an interior of an occupant compartment of a vehicle and spatially fixed therein within reach of at least one vehicle occupant.

3. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 2, wherein said securement means is mounted to a console within the occupant compartment of the vehicle.

4. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 2, wherein said securement means is mounted to a dashboard within the occupant compartment of the vehicle.

5. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 2, further comprising:

a support body defining an interior space therein; and

the inflatable bladder confined within the interior space of the support body.

6. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 5, wherein the support body further comprises an open-top recess surrounded by a substantially annular wall that defines the interior space of the support body.

7. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 6, further comprising:

an inwardly protruding lip located at a top portion of the substantially annular wall, the inwardly protruding lip having a reduced inner diameter relative to an inner diameter of the substantially annular wall.

8. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 2, wherein said inflatable bladder of the securement means is configured for releasably gripping a hand-held beverage container.

9. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 2, further comprising:

a pressure feed line fluidly interconnected between the inflatable bladder and a vehicular fluid pressure source.

10. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 9, further comprising:

a control valve disposed between the inflatable bladder and the vehicular fluid pressure source, the control valve configurable to transition the holder between the article-release configuration and the article-securing configuration.

11. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

a sensing means for detecting the presence of an inserted article and causing the inflatable bladder to transition between the inflated and deflated configurations.

12. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 11, wherein said sensing means is a motion sensor.

13. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 11, wherein said sensing means is a photovoltaic cell.

14. The holder for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle as recited in claim 11, wherein said sensing means is a pressure sensor.

15. A method for releasably securing a manually carryable article in a vehicle, said method comprising:

anchoring a manually carryable article in a holder located within an occupant compartment of a vehicle utilizing an inflatable bladder, said anchoring step comprising:

establishing an article-release configuration of a holder by establishing a deflated configuration of the inflatable bladder thereby facilitating insertion of the manually carryable article therein;

inserting the manually carryable article into an interior space of the holder; and

establishing an article-securing configuration of the holder by inflating the inflatable bladder thereby impeding disengagement of the inserted article therefrom.

16. The method as recited in claim 15, further comprising:

locating the holder within an interior of the occupant compartment of the vehicle within reach of at least one vehicle occupant.

17. The method as recited in claim 16, further comprising:

mounting the holder to a console within the occupant compartment of the vehicle.

18. The method as recited in claim 16, further comprising:

mounting the holder to a dashboard of the vehicle.

19. The method as recited in claim 15, further comprising:

providing the holder in a form having a support body that defines an interior space therein; and

confining the inflatable bladder within the interior space of the support body.

20. The method as recited in claim 19, further comprising:

providing the support body with an open-top recess surrounded by a substantially annular wall that defines the interior space of the support body.

21. The method as recited in claim 20, further comprising:

providing an inwardly protruding lip located at a top portion of the substantially annular wall, the inwardly protruding lip having a reduced inner diameter relative to an inner diameter of the substantially annular wall.

22. The method as recited in claim 15, further comprising:

releasably gripping a hand-held beverage container utilizing the inflatable bladder.

23. The method as recited in claim 15, further comprising:

providing a pressure feed line fluidly interconnected between the inflatable bladder and a vehicular fluid pressure source.

24. The method as recited in claim 23, further comprising:

providing a control valve disposed between the inflatable bladder and the vehicular fluid pressure source; and

configuring the control valve to transition the holder between the article-release configuration and the article-securing configuration.

25. The method as recited in claim 15, further comprising:

detecting the presence of an inserted article in the holder utilizing a sensor and responsively causing the inflatable bladder to transition between the inflated and deflated configurations.

26. A beverage container holder for use in a vehicle comprising:

a) a container support including a support surface delineating a bottom of a container receiving space, the surface being for engagement with the bottom of a beverage container when the holder is in use;

b) the support including upstanding portions delineating at least sections of the perimeter of the container space;

c) an inflatable bladder connected to an air supply conduit and operably connected to the upstanding portions for engaging at least three locations about a perimeter of such a container when the holder is in use;

d) a valve for controlling a flow of air under pressure from the conduit to the bladder; and,

e) a container activated switch that controls said valve.

27. The holder of claim 26 wherein the switch is a photovoltaic cell.

28. The holder of claim 26 wherein the switch is pressure sensitive.

29. For use in a vehicle, an improved beverage container holder comprising:

a) base adapted to be mounted in a vehicle at a location readily accessible to at least one vehicle occupant;

b) the base defining a container receiving recess;

c) an inflatable bladder connected to an air supply conduit and connected to the base and positioned to engage at least three perimital points on a portion of a container positioned in the recess;

d) an air supply conduit connected to the bladder for supplying air under pressure to the bladder;

e) a valve operable connected to the conduit for controlling a flow of air under pressure from the conduit to the bladder; and,

f) a container activated switch that controls the valve.

30. The holder of claim 29 wherein the switch is a photovoltaic cell.

31. The holder of claim 29 wherein the switch is pressure sensitive.

32. An improved process of supporting a beverage container in selected one of truck and a tractor, the process, comprising:

a) positioning a beverage container on a support surface at a lower end of a container receiving recess in a container holder mounted with a cab of the vehicles;

b) moving a container gripping diaphragm toward the container by inflating the diaphragm initiated by a signal from a proximity switch that establishes communication between a source of air under pressure and the diaphragm.

c) continuing the movement until the container is engaged at least three perimetally spaced points whereby to secure the container in the holder.

33. An improved process of supporting a beverage container in selected one of a truck and a tractor, the process, comprising:

a) positioning a beverage container on a support surface at a lower end of a container receiving recess in a container holder mounted with a cab of the vehicles;

b) moving a container gripping diaphragm toward the container by inflating the diaphragm initiated by a signal from a pressure sensitive switch that establishes communication between a source of air under pressure and the diaphragm; and,

c) continuing the movement until the container is engaged at least three perimetally spaced points whereby to secure the container in the holder.